

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
The White House Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney,

Our nation is currently fighting a growing prescription drug abuse and opioid epidemic that is devastating communities across the nation and particularly those in Pennsylvania. We strongly urge you to prioritize investments into the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and reject spending cuts to the federal program in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Fiscal Year 2018 Budget.

Now more than ever our nation must prioritize federal funding to combat rampant drug abuse. As you are aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2015 opioids were involved in the death of 33,091 Americans – more than double the rate in 2000. The opioid epidemic is tragically engulfing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and has claimed the lives of more than 3,383 of our constituents in 2015. We must increase the federal government's response in the wake of this public health crisis.

Since 1998, the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has been a leading force in identifying illicit drug threats and developing a national strategy to reduce drug usage across the country. The agency is responsible for overseeing the federal government's drug control programs and coordinates with the President, other federal agencies, and substance abuse organizations to ensure the public health and safety of American families. The ONDCP's national strategy uses evidenced-based solutions to raise awareness about the severe consequences and negative health effects of chronic drug usage within our communities.

It is proposed that two critical ONDCP programs are at risk of having all their federal funding stripped in the FY 18 President's Budget. The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program addresses threats from national and international drug trafficking organizations that distribute heroin, synthetic drugs, and illegal prescription drugs. It has been successful in collaborating with law enforcement agencies to identify and prosecute high ranking drug leaders and cartels. Additionally, the Drug-Free Communities Program has been successful in providing grants and partnering with local stakeholders, law enforcement agencies, and community coalitions dedicated to reducing substance abuse among adolescents and young adults. We believe that these two programs are critical to the ongoing war on drugs and must not be eliminated.

The plight of the opioid crisis is evidently getting worse and that the federal government must act now to support the individuals battling with addiction. We must ensure that states such as

Pennsylvania have the resources and support needed to prevent addiction and increase access to treatment options to save lives.

It is our hope that OMB understands the severity and urgency of the opioid and prescription drug crisis and prioritizes funding for the ONDCP to ensure a strong federal response to the matter. We look forward to your prompt response about proposed FY 18 funding levels for the ONDCP.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Ryan Costello
Member of Congress



Lou Barletta
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress